

Message Text

PAGE 01 PHNOM 10872 091127Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 091038Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3325

INFO CINCPAC

COMUSSAG

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PHNOM PENH 10872

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS SECDEF AND CJCS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI CB

SUBJECT: STATUS OF NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN

REF: PHNOM PENH 10806

1. NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION NOW SEEMS TO BE FOLLOWING THE FAMILIAR COURSE OF MOST KHMER PROGRAMS: WELL ADVANCED ON PLANNING AND PUBLICITY AND WELL BEHIND ON IMPLEMENTING ACTION. WE ARE ATTEMPTING TO STIMULATE THE LATTER. FOLLOWING ARE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS.

2. IN ADDITION TO A SATURATION RADIO AND TELEVISION CAMPAIGN, THE POLITICAL WARFARE DIRECTORATE HAS DROPPED THOUSANDS OF LEAFLETS AND BROADCAST AERIAL MESSAGES FROM ITS C-47. EIGHT PUBLICITY TEAMS COMPLETE WITH ORCHESTRA AND ENTERTAINERS HAVE MOVED ABOUT THE CITY BUT HAVE THUS FAR DRAWN MEAGRE AUDIENCES, THE POLITICAL WARFARE DIRECTORATE REPORTED. TIMID PROPOSALS ARE NOW BEING ADVANCE FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF PUBLICITY TEAMS INTO THE SCHOOLS. A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FREE RICE RATION FOR GENERAL RESERVE TROOPS HAS BEEN DELAYED PENDING FINAL RELEASE BY FANK COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF SOSTHENE FERNANDEZ, EXPECTED TODAY.

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PAGE 02 PHNOM 10872 091127Z

3. DURING ANOTHER TOUR OF THE CITY'S SUBDIVISIONS YESTERDAY, EM-BASSY OFFICERS FOUND LOCAL OFFICIALS GENERALLY WELL INFORMED OF THEIR CONSCRIPTION DUTIES BUT HIGHLY SKEPTICAL THAT THE CHIEFS OF TEN AND FIFTY HOUSEHOLDS WILL PRODUCE ACCRATE REGISTRA-

TION LISTS AND THAT DRAFTEES WILL REPORT WHEN CONVOKED.
AT A MEETING YESTERDAY OF MG THAPPANA NGINN'S JOINT STAFF
(ATTENDED BY CHMEDTC, POL-MIL COUNSELOR AND MEDTC OFFICERS),
THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT'S SECRETARY GENERAL ECHOED EVEN MORE
STRONGLY THIS SKEPTICISM, INDIVATING THAT CONSCRIPTS WILL BE
VERY FEW IN NUMBER. WE ADVANCED AND THAPPANA NGINN APPROVED PRO-
POSALS THAT (A) THE MUNICIPAL AND GENERAL MOBILIZATION STRUCTURE
CALL ON OTHER GOVERNMENTAL SERVICES INCLUDING SECURITY ARMS IF
CIVILIAN OFFICIALS FEEL THEY ARE UNABLE TO DO THE JOB AND (B) THE
NUMBER OF INSPECTION TEAMS BE GREATLY EXPANDED (FROM FOUR) AND
THEIR SCHEDULE ACCELERATED (FROM A BEGINNING DATE OF OCTOBER 10).

4. PRESIDENT LON NOL HAS REQUESTED BRIEFINGS EACH EVENING ON
THE FINDINGS OF THE INSPECTION TEAMS. UNFORTUNATELY HE PLACED AT
THE HEAD OF THE INSPECTION OPERATION THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF GEN-
ERAL MOBILIZATION VAN SARIN, WHO IS A WEAK REED AND UNWILLING TO
ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY. WE ARE SUGGESTING THAT HE BE
REPLACED.

5. AT ANOTHER MEETING TODAY, OCTOBER 9, WITH FANK CINC SOSTHENE
FERNANDEZ AND MEMBERS OF FANK GENERAL STAFF (ATTENDED BY CHMEDTC
AND MEDTC OFFICERS), A DETAILED REVIEW WAS MADE OF ALL ACTION WHICH
WILL BE REQUIRED TO INSURE RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES AND THE RECRUIT-
MENT CENTER (FORMERLY THE FANK TRANSIT CENTER) WILL BE READY FOR
THE RECEPTION OF DRAFTEES. A STATUS REPORT WAS MADE BY ALL STAFF
SECTIONS AND PROBLEMS WERE ADJUDICATED. THIS MEETING WAS FOLLOWED
BY A VISIT TO THE RECRUITMENT CENTER BY RESPONSIBLE FANK STAFFS
ACCOMPANIED BY SEVERAL MEDTC OFFICERS. BASED ON OBSERVATIONS
THERE, PLANS SEEM WELL ADVANCED FOR THE RECEIPT OF 500 MEN EVERY
TWO DAYS AS PROGRAMMED BY FANK ACPER. THIS INTAKE IN PHNOM PENH
WILL, OF COURSE, NOT MEET THE NEEDS OF A 25,000-MAN PROGRAM AND
WILL REQUIRE SIMILAR EFFORTS IN THE PROVINCES. WE ARE DISCUSSING
MEANS OF EXPANDING RECEPTION FACILITIES IN PHNOM PENH AND THE
PROVINCES.

6. THAPPANA NGINN INFORMED US THIS AFTERNOON AFTER ABOVE DRAFTED
THAT HE HAS TRANSFERRED RESPONSIBILITY FOR INSPECTING REGISTRA-
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PHNOM 10872 091127Z

TION AND CONSCRIPTION OPERATIONS FROM VAN SARIN TO FORMER
NATIONAL GENDARMERIE COMMANDER BG CHEA KIM ENG AND THAT HE HAS
ASKED THE MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT TO REPLACE ITS REPRESENTATIVE
ON THE JOINT STAFF. THESE CHANGES SHOULD IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR
A SUCCESSFUL PROGRAM.
ENDERS

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED SECDEF AND CJCS.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 11 MAY 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PHNOM10872
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: n/a
Film Number: P750018-1902
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731065/abqcegpj.tel
Line Count: 106
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, TEXT ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: PHNOM PENH 10806
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 21 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <21-Nov-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <04-Jan-2002 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: STATUS OF NATIONAL CONSCRIPTION CAMPAIGN
TAGS: MILI, US, CB
To: STATE INFO CINCPAC
COMUSSAG
BANGKOK
SAIGON
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005